



THE IRON SOLDIER

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

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Official Newsletter of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team

Al-Anbar Province, Iraq

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 REMEMBERED DURING HISTORIC CEREMONY

By Capt. Steven Fischer - Brigade Headquarters Company Commander

RAMADI, Iraq— Marking the somber significance of Patriot Day and recognizing their own service and sacrifice, the Washington, Pa. based 2nd Brigade Combat Team, Headquarters Company awarded its Soldiers the Shoulder Sleeve Insignia for Former Wartime Service referred to as the "Combat Patch," on September 11, 2005.

The Combat Patch, worn on the right shoulder of the uniform top just below the U.S. flag, marks the military division that a particular Soldier served with during combat. The tradition of the Combat Patch first began in WWII. This presentation marks the first time since the Second World War and only the second time in the Iron Division's history the "Keystone Bloody Bucket" patch of the 28th Infantry Division has been awarded.

"Today, we the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, all are fighting terrorists here every day so we will not have to fight them on our own soil"

U.S. Soldiers always wear their current unit patch on their left shoulder during peace time and war time. Soldiers wear



Col. John Gronski, Commander of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, and Brigade Command Sergeant Major Horace Pysher award Captain Peter Keruskin, Brigade Operations Planner, from Deemston, Pa., and Principal at Trinity Middle School his Keystone Bloody Bucket Patch for combat service in Iraq on September 11, 2005.

Photo by Spc. Samantha Kerschner

nothing on their right shoulder if they have never deployed to a hostile area of operation, however, today's ceremony authorizes the Iron Soldiers to wear the combat patch on the right shoulder of their uniform for the rest of their military careers. The Combat Patch ceremony held at Camp Ramadi, has historical significance; The 2BCT Soldiers now join the many National Guard Soldiers called to wartime duty.

Headquarters Company was originally organized on July 1, 1872 as the "Washington Guards" in its present home town of Washington, PA. In 1898, the unit served in the Philippines during the Spanish American War as Co H, 10th Infantry Regiment. The unit again served on active duty along the Mexican Border in 1916. In WWI, the company deployed for service in France where H Company served under the flag of the 110th Infantry Regiment. During the Second World War, Company H, 110th Infantry Regiment fought once again in Europe against the Germans, in

Normandy, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Huertgen Forest, and the Battle of the Bulge. The company activated and deployed to Europe as a deterrent to communist totalitarianism during the Korean War.

Col. John Gronski, Commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, presented the Iron Soldiers their coveted combat patches and spoke to his troops. "We remember the heroism of 9/11 today as we recognize our own sacrifices as we fight terrorism here in Iraq. I remember exactly where I was on 9/11, I thought, what could I do to fight our Nation's

enemies. Today, we the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, all are fighting terrorists here every day so we will not have to fight them on our own soil," said Col Gronski.



2nd BCT Soldiers bow their heads in prayer for the victims of September 11, 2001 and fellow Soldiers who have died fighting, to ensure there is never a repeat of that tragic day.

Photo by Spc. Samantha Kerschner

2nd Lt. Tiffany Harwick spoke proudly of her new Combat Patch stating, "I am

(Continued on page 7)

GREAT JOB 1/5 MARINES



The 1st Battalion 5th Marines contributions to the success in Ar-Ramadi are unequalled. The difference the Marines made will have a lasting effect on all of Iraq but especially the children who will shape tomorrow.

The biggest contribution the 1/5 made will be felt at home in the United States. Because of all of their outstanding work and sacrifice, life in America continues to flourish.

Thanks for all of your hard work and best of luck in the future.

WALK IN THE BOOTS OF A PLATOON LEADER

By Spc. Robert L. Kear

RAMADI, Iraq—What is the Junior Leadership Program? It is a chance for junior enlisted Soldiers to experience what it is like to walk in the boots of a platoon leader or platoon sergeant.

My week as a platoon leader started off good; I spent my time running around, organizing things, and constantly checking on equipment. Of course, I also had to do all of my regular duties, including work details that the junior enlisted personnel normally perform.

After a few days of doing all of this and not getting much sleep; I started to get the hang of things and began to realize why the senior leaders are unable to help out with all of the work and go on all of the missions.

It had only been three days and I was exhausted. I could not imagine 24 hours a day 7 days a week for the whole deployment.

I felt that the best part of the whole



Spc. Robert L. Kear a resident of Pittsburgh, Pa., experienced the opportunity to participate in the Junior Leadership Program. He is a member of C Co. 876 Engineers.

experience was getting to tell people I normally don't outrank what to do. Since I am the acting platoon leader, I can do that now. Knowing that they will accomplish the mission without me helping is a good feeling, but I often helped out because I enjoy being part of getting the job done.

As the end of the week now approached, I was anxious for it to be over. I wish that I had been able to spend more time in the position so that I could learn more about what my leaders are required to do on a daily basis.

I feel that the Junior Leadership Program is one of the best programs we have adopted. Eventually, most of the junior enlisted will be in a leadership position for one reason or another. This program provides great insight into what to expect, so that Soldiers are not completely overwhelmed when the time comes to take charge in a senior leadership position.

METAL MAN MAKES A DIFFERENCE

by 1st Lt. Monica Luongo



Spc. Eric Watts a resident of Philadelphia, Pa., and a welder with the 876 Engineer Battalion, goes to work on his next sheet of metal to be used to up-armor vehicles. Watts is proudly serving his country in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Photo by 1st Lt. Monica Luongo

Ramadi, Iraq - Since hitting ground in Kuwait over three months ago, Spc. Eric Watts has been busy up-arming the 876 Engineer Battalion, one vehicle at a time.

In the civilian world, Watts is a supervisor at a packaging plant in Lansdale, Pa. He joined the military back in 1980 as a welder and metal worker and has been at it ever since.

Watts did a 12 year stretch of active duty service from 1980 until 1992. He is a veteran of the first Gulf War, spending eight months in Iraq. After a brief break in service he got back in the game; this time with the Maryland National Guard. Watts spent eight years there before moving to Philadelphia when he joined the 103rd Engineer Battalion in 2001.

"Spc. Watts is one of the most valuable assets I have in the motor pool" says Warrant Officer Jason Etling. The two have been working together since the Battalion's mobilization in January. "He is the best welder and metal worker

I've ever had work for me."

The relationship between the two is a good one said Watts, "Chief respects the knowledge I have on the trade, and allows me to do what needs to be done."

Watts is the only 44Bravo (metal worker / welder) that the 876 Engineers have, however he does get assistance from the other guys in the motor pool. On any given day Sgt. Brown can be found lending an extra hand on the metal cutting. The Battalion also boast two machinists; Spc. Beck and Spc. Purcell, who help Watts make the specialized parts he sometimes needs to hold the heavy sheet metal together.

"It's back breaking work," says Watts. Each sheet of ballistic metal that he uses weighs anywhere between 600 and 1200 pounds each, depending on its width.

It is all well worth the effort. "Up armor gives the most protection," explains Watts. Having ballistic metal protects the Soldiers inside the vehicle from shrapnel, bullets, and other debris. Without it, the lives of the passengers are at risk.

To date, Watts and his team have up-armored 18 vehicles for the Engineers. It takes about 2-3 days, depend-

"Spc. Watts is one of the most valuable assets I have in the motor pool"

ing on the vehicle type, and it all starts with the templates that Watts designs for each vehicle.

The Engineers are overly happy and thankful to have Watts with them on this deployment. His expertise and hard work has provided the extra protection the Soldiers need while patrolling in Iraq.

The 876 Engineers have been in Iraq since late June and will finish their tour next spring. The time away from family and friends is probably the most difficult, but this battalion stays busy at work which makes the days go a little bit faster.

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MAILING ADDRESSES FOR :

Ar-Ramadi
Soldiers Name
Soldiers Unit
Camp Ar-Ramadi
APO, AE 09362-9997

Habbaniyah / Taqaddum
Soldiers Name
Soldiers Unit
Camp Taqaddum
APO, AE 09381

Al Asad
Soldiers Name
Soldiers Unit
Camp Al Asad
APO, AE 09333

Please take into consideration, when mailing perishables: mail could take up to two weeks to reach Soldiers.

INDIANA CONGRESSMAN VISITS SOLDIERS

by 1st Lt. Eric McCorkle

AR RAMADI, Iraq—"We support the Soldiers and are proud of the job they are doing," said Indiana Congressman Mike Pence.

Congressman Pence, along with other members of a Congressional Delegation including: Representative Lincoln Davis of TN, Representative Jeb Hensarling TX, Representative Connie Mack FL, Representative Mike McIntyre NC, and Representative Ed Case HI, visited Alpha Co. 138th Signal Battalion at Camp Ramadi, Iraq on the 5th of September.

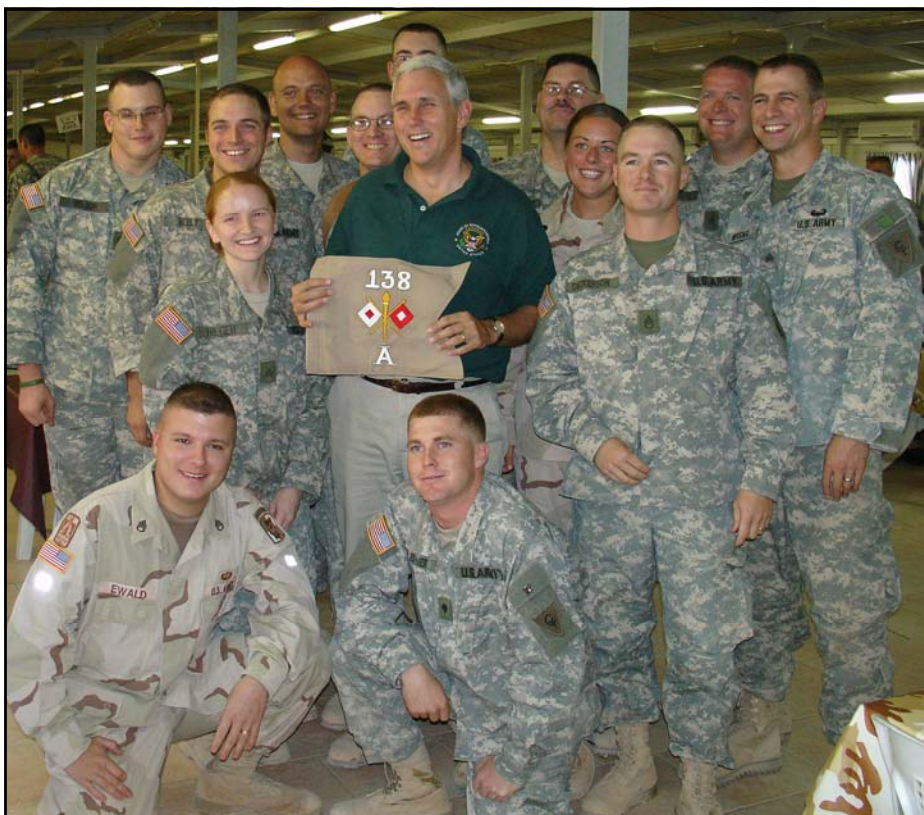
The Delegations visit to Ar Ramadi was just one stop on a whirlwind tour of Iraq where they met with governmental officials, military leaders, and individual Soldiers.

Alpha Company Commander Capt. Keith Paris said, "We wanted to show our guests how we live and what we do for a living."

I was amazed the he (Congressman Mike Pence) went from seeing the president, the prime minister of Iraq, and four star generals; and then took the time to visit the signal company from his home district."

Alpha Company of Anderson, Indiana is a communications unit from the 38th Infantry Division. The National Guard unit was mobilized in January and attached to the 2/28th Brigade Combat Team from Pennsylvania. The company provides a voice and data network for phone services and computer traffic.

The delegation toured the base and



Indiana Congressman Mike Pence visits with Soldiers of Alpha Co. 138th Signal Battalion at Camp Ramadi, Iraq on the 5th of September.

talked with Soldiers to get a perspective of their jobs and their experience in Iraq.

Congressman Pence ate dinner with Alpha Company Soldiers, discussed news from home, and shared a few laughs. "I will visit with the family readiness group in the future to let family members know how their Soldiers are doing," he said.

Alpha Co. Soldiers enjoyed spending time with Congressman Pence and members of the Alpha Co. 138th Signal Battalion Family Readiness Group look forward to his visit with them in Indiana.

You can find additional photos and news about Alpha Company 138th Signal at:

<http://ironSoldiers.army.mil/UNITS/138SIG/index.htm>



Here's Cake In Your Face!
 Congratulations to Specialists Michael and Amanda Falls who are celebrating their 1st Wedding Anniversary while deployed together in Iraq

BENEFITING FROM PHYSICAL THERAPY by Capt. Brian Hill

Physical therapy has not been present in the 2BCT or any other National Guard unit historically until now. The benefits of early intervention in musculoskeletal injuries are now being seen with the Soldiers of the 2 BCT, now that the 2BCT has a physical therapist and a physical therapy technician to treat injuries sustained in Iraq.

Capt. Brian Hill, a resident of Gainesville, FL, and his partner, Spc. Travis Huber of Lexington, KY, will be here taking care of Soldiers as long as the 2BCT is in Iraq. Their mission is to treat the Soldiers here on the FOB instead of sending them out on convoys to other sites. Convoys are risky in this region of Iraq, so it only makes sense to bring the care to them.

This country produces a lot of business for physical therapy in more ways than you would normally think. We of course see battle field injuries but also injuries that you would see back home such as sprained ankles, strained muscles and so on. Soldiers like to play hard after work; whether the injury is from softball or just the usual running type injuries; we have seen it all.

Spc. Richard Moreno and Staff Sgt. Joel Hesterman, are currently receiving treatment here at Camp Junction City Physical Therapy. Moreno came in with severe back pain and was unable to perform his normal duties which require



(left to right) Spc. Travis Huber, Spc. Richard Moreno, Capt Brian Hill and Staff Sgt. Joel Hesterman outside the Junction City Physical Therapy Center in Camp Ramadi, Iraq.

Photo by Spc. Candice Gerber



Spc. Richard Moreno benefits from physical therapy treatment on his back while Staff Sgt. Joel Hesterman receives ice treatment to his shoulder. They are currently receiving treatment at Camp Junction City Physical Therapy.

him to wear protective equipment. We treated him for 2 weeks and he is nearly pain free and ready to go to work. He would have had to convoy a long distance to receive this treatment in years past.

Hesterman has just begun his treatment for a shoulder injury. We are hoping for the same results.

We have seen hundreds of Soldiers so far and have had great success. Only three Soldiers have had to leave the base to receive additional treatment. Those Soldiers will more than likely return here for their follow up treatment.

Spc. Huber and I started out here with no equipment, just our hands. Over the past month we have acquired much of the same equipment you would find in an outpatient physical therapy center back in the states.

We plan to take our physical therapy show on the road soon so that other Soldiers in the 2 BCT can benefit from services.

"Conserve the fighting force," is the mission of Army Medical Department Soldiers, and here at Camp Junction City, Ramadi, we are doing just that.

TEAM PREDATOR REMEMBERS WHY WE'RE HERE by 1st Lt. Antonia Greene



1st Sgt. Robert Nelson, plays "Walkie-Talkie" with a local Iraqi child, while conducting presence patrols in the Iraqi town of Saddiquiyah.

Photo by: Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli

HABBANIYAH, Iraq—During a routine watch on Friday, elements of A Company 1-110th Infantry spend time

interacting with the young citizens of Iraq.

On August 26th, 2005 Alpha Company was conducting presence patrols in the Predator AO (area of operations). In the town they call Saddiquiyah, elements of team Predator take time to experience the simple joys of human relations.

"When you're working day and night chasing bad guys, it's easy to forget about the people at the center of all this. Taking time to reacquaint yourself with what really matters out here is something I encourage all my Soldiers to do," said 1st Sgt. Robert Nelson, A Co. 1-110th IN.

Like many elements of Task Force Panther, Team Predator's main focus is

neutralizing the insurgency. Focused area presence patrols roll out several times a day, familiarizing themselves with the different sectors of the Predator AO. Each patrol is a mission in itself.

Time is spent planning the course, targeting specific areas to search and certain individuals to engage in conversation. There are questions to be answered and information to be gathered each time they leave the gate.

A Company 1-110th is becoming accustomed to their new environment and with each day that passes, Team Predator is asserting themselves and gaining more control in their area.

PROVIDING A LITTLE RELIEF by Sgt. Charity Lewis

RAMADI, Iraq—Members of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team and Iraqi Security Force worked together at the Ramadi Glass and Ceramic Works to provide security and disburse condolence payments to 2300 employees.

Joint Coalition Forces comprised of the 5th Civil Affairs Group, the 2nd Brigade 28th Infantry Division, and the 222nd Field Artillery Battery helped bring financial aid to the glass and ceramics factory employees, who will receive funds totaling up to \$112,000.

The funding comes from the Commanders Emergency Response Program [CERP]. The funds enable commanders to assist the Iraqi people in times when urgent humanitarian relief is needed. These include recovery efforts and economic initiatives.

The relief today came in the form of one month salary for each employee. Since the factory was closed 10 months ago, most employees have been receiving unemployment assistance which equaled approximately 50% of the normal pay.

Each employee was required to provide photo identification and sign a pay roster to be eligible for the payment. The total number of employees expected was 2300, the two day project ended in 2071 employees signing in and receiving the \$50 payment.

Iraqi Security Forces provided security at the entrances and maintained a secure area for the employees of the glass factory. Employees were also given the option of visiting the voter registration area which the ISF had also secured for them.

Members of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team and the 5th Civil Affairs Group were on site to assist with providing security for the factory employees and assisted members of the ISF with female employee searches as they entered the glass factory property. In addition they distributed soccer balls to the Iraqi children.

The 222nd Field Artillery Battalion assisted the ISF with maintaining a secure area around the factory. Major Victor Sarkozi, 43, of Ogden, Utah, led his Soldiers, and coordinated with the Civil Affairs Marines on the day's mission.

or by passing out soccer balls during patrols in neighborhoods, said Sarkozi.

"The overall objective of the 222nd FA is to protect the people of Ramadi and we're doing that by lethal means, said Sarkozi, "We're keeping them safe and secure until enough ISF personnel are trained to take over that mission.

Lieutenant Colonel Scott Lystad, 47, a resident of Brea, Cal. is the 2nd Marine Division Civil Affairs officer responsible for ensuring all conditions were met before returning the glass factory to the Iraqis.

The 5th CAG was also responsible for ensuring re-training and proper identification of the

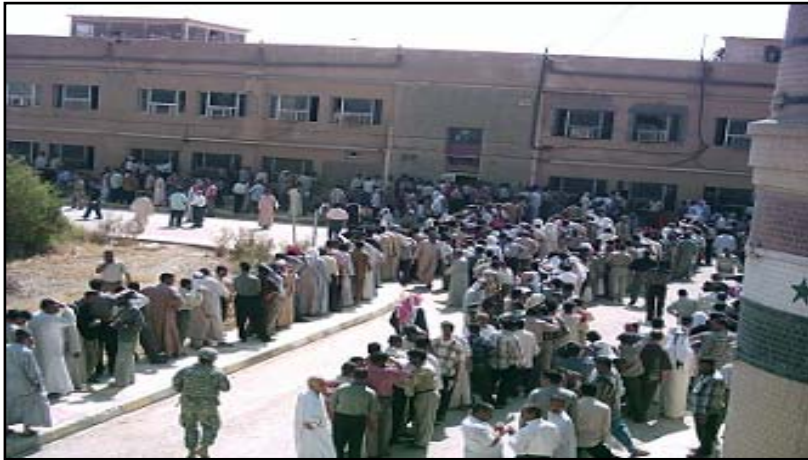
glass factory security force; assessment of damage and looting that occurred after the factory was closed and return some items that had been confiscated during the factory closure.

"The livelihoods of 2300 families have been affected," said Lystad.

The CERP funds that have been paid to the factory will affect the citizens of Ramadi in three areas. "It demonstrates that peace brings prosperity; that the Iraqi Transitional Government is working hard to improve citizens' lives and that life is beginning to return to normal, said Lystad. It restores income to those who otherwise might feel compelled to commit terrorist acts for cash."

The Iraqis are angry at the terrorist in their midst, but they are terrified to fight them or go against their demands. The factory workers, who are working hard to bring the factory back to life, cursed the terrorists when a suicide vehicle bomb detonated in front of the factory and severed the water main and electricity lines."

"This has been one of the most worthwhile endeavors of my life," said Lystad. "I'm amazed at the Marines and Soldiers in the Al Anbar Province; they show remarkable skill, patience, determination and optimism."



Ramadi Glass and Ceramic Works employees gather outside the factory in order to receive condolence payments from the Civil Affairs Group.

Photo by Sgt. Charity Lewis

"Our first mission today was to provide a safe and secure environment where the Iraqi citizens and workers could come and participate in the registration process," said Sarkozi. "The second part of the mission was to pay a \$50 CERP condolence payment to each employee of the Glass Factory."

During the payments, the ISF was there to provide security for the voter registration booth, said Sarkozi, who also explained that their presence at the factories served two functions

"It empowers the ISF workers and gives them more confidence in their ability and competence in doing a mission and also builds a trust in the Iraqi people in their own security forces," said Sarkozi. "Eventually we will pull out and the ISF will be the forces on the ground to protect the citizens from insurgent activity."

222nd Field Artillery Battalion consists of over 500 Soldiers, coming from 16 states; the majority of Soldiers come from Utah, Puerto Rico, Texas, and Pennsylvania.

The goal is to continue to help the local community through civil affairs functions and military operations such as CERP payments at the glass factory

THE SOFTER SIDE

by CW3 Joseph Witmer

Most of us think of the Safety Office as the people that nag about fire extinguishers and extension cords. The reality is there is much more involved, especially when it comes to Tactical Risk Management. The mission of the safety office is to advise the command and staff to assist in reducing the probability of incidents, both accidentally and tactically. In order to accomplish this, safety personnel routinely join a variety of units to observe missions as a member of the team. This was especially true on a recent mission.

Spc. Agnoni and I had the privilege of going on her first mission with B Troop, 104th CAV. Our original purpose was to observe the tactics of the platoon and monitor how well the mission was executed. The commander's intent was simple, conduct a cordon and search of a specific area. Although the mission sounds simple, to be successful it must be planned out to the smallest detail and rehearsed by every member of the team.

"Having her there was invaluable to the success of the mission"

It is important to note that Spc. Agnoni joined the Brigade Safety Office during our rotation at NTC. Moving from her MOS position as a Food Service Specialist, she dove into the Safety world eager to learn and help. Even though she was not school trained, her enthusiasm and dedication to the success of the brigade mission made her a key member of my team. She spent the time at Camp Shelby and the NTC attending a wide variety of training events to include: train-



Spc. Lauren Agnoni talks with the residents of a local house while coalition Soldiers conduct a search for illegal weapons.

Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 3 Joseph Witmer

ing as a Lioness. Her Lioness training came in handy on the mission with the 104th CAV.

"When I thought about how I was able to make the kids smile, I smiled," said Agnoni. "I felt a real sense of accomplishment when the mission was over"

The plan was briefed to the squad and rehearsed by 1LT Stanford, the Platoon Leader for 3rd Platoon, B Troop, 1-104th CAV. Spc. Agnoni and I were included in the mission as representatives for the BDE Safety Office. As things progressed, as with all missions, the terrain and conditions forced the team to adapt and adjust. Since this well-trained team was briefed on the commander's intent, each member of the team was able to adapt to the changing environment.

As the section of the town was cordoned off and the search started, several women and children were encountered. Since she was trained as a Lioness, Spc. Agnoni was able to step in

and provide a calming effect on the group, allowing the search to continue. 1st Lt. Stanford said, "having her there was invaluable to the success of the mission". An added benefit included gathering key information that may not have been as easy to obtain without a female, due to cultural differences. During one particular incident, a young girl was clinging to Spc. Agnoni for support and comfort. Spc. Agnoni's presence greatly reassured this frightened child during what could have been a traumatic experience.

Although the mission probably would have been a success with or without Spc. Agnoni, her presence met the Brigade Commander's goal of supporting cultural customs of the host nation as well as maintaining the dignity and respect of the females in this country. Presenting Spc. Agnoni with the Brigade Coin for her service during the mission, COL Gronski stated, "that is exactly how it should work" and "that is the reason they (female Soldiers of the 2/28 BCT) were trained as Lionesses."

9/11 PATCH CEREMONY

Continued From Page 1

truly proud because I am one of the first female Officers to receive the Keystone Combat Patch in the history of the United States Army."

Since September 11, 2001, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has sent thousands of Soldiers Worldwide to fight the Global War on Terrorism. The 175 Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Headquarters

Company that received combat patches are part of 4,000 Soldiers that deployed this past June from Camp Shelby, Miss., to Iraq, in support of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

The Brigade Headquarters Company provides support to many diverse staff sections of the 2nd Brigade Command including: administration, plan-

ning, intelligence, logistics, communications, maintenance, and medical support.

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team assumed control of the Al Anbar Province from the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division during the Transfer of Authority ceremony on July 28, 2005, at Camp Ramadi, Iraq.

2ND BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM IRON SOLDIERS IN ACTION



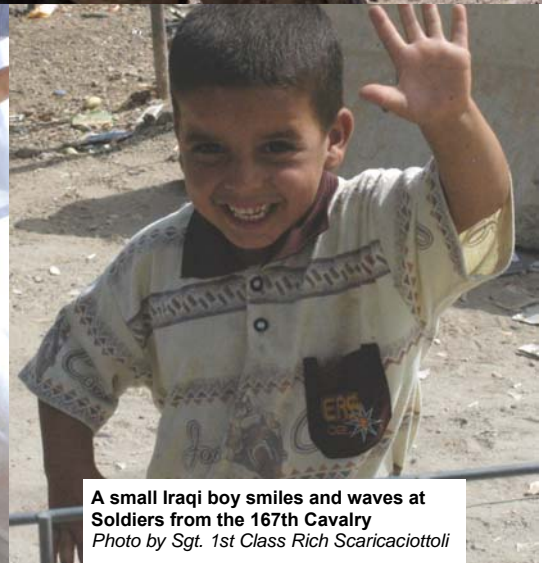
Spc. Melanie Kline of the 28th MPs just before leaving on a convoy escort mission.



Master Sgt. Walter Gray and Maj. William Fall pay tribute to a fallen Iraqi Soldier during a memorial service.
Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli



A U.S. Navy Corpsman treats a young Iraqi girl who was injured while playing with some other local kids.
Photo by 1st Lt. Rose Forrest



A small Iraqi boy smiles and waves at Soldiers from the 167th Cavalry
Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli

Send your pics to SFC Scary (Richard.Scaricaciottoli@us.army.mil) Include a brief description and who took the pic.

An Iraqi Army Sergeant makes friends with a local girl.
Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli



Capt. David Calhoun and 1st Lt. Christopher Stanford of the 104th Cavalry receive a report from an interpreter (not seen) while out on patrol in Ramadi.
Photo by CW3 Joe Witmer



Camp Ramadi Fire Chief, Robert Edmiston is presented with a certificate of appreciation for the Ramadi fire departments dedication to duty during a ceremony on the anniversary of the 9/11 Terrorist attack.
Photo by Spec Samantha Kerschner

Lt. Col. Gary Jackson 2nd Marine Division 5th CAG Det 3 Commander, present a plaque of appreciation to the 2BCT. (left to right) Lt. Col. Christopher Yeakle, Maj. Sean Tubbs, Col. John Gronski, Lt. Col. Gary Jackson, and 2BCT Deputy Commander Col. Regis Cardiff.
Photo by Sgt. Charity A. Lewis





Col. John Gronski spends some time with local kids at a school
Photo by 1st Lt. Rose Forrest



1st Lt. Jason Seacrest with a local Sheik.
 The two men will work closely together in the upcoming months.



The swimming pool at Camp Anaconda - Believe it or not.
Photo by Lance Cpl. Kenneth Lane

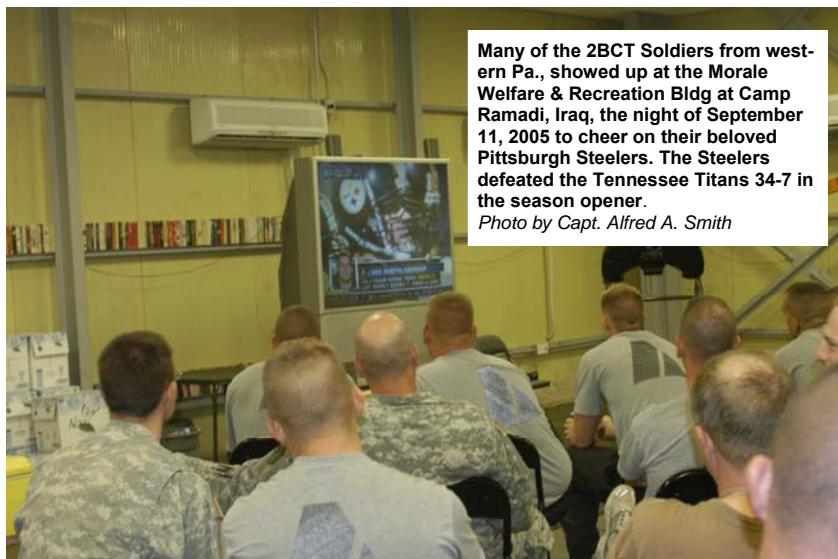


Spc. Adam Exstrum, from Hastings, Nebraska and serving with the 167 Cavalry out on patrol



Lt. Col. Mike Bimler sizes up the engine compartment of an old Iraqi Mig.

Send your pics to SFC Scary (Richard.Scaricaciottoli@us.army.mil) Include a brief description and who took the pic.



Many of the 2BCT Soldiers from western Pa., showed up at the Morale Welfare & Recreation Bldg at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, the night of September 11, 2005 to cheer on their beloved Pittsburgh Steelers. The Steelers defeated the Tennessee Titans 34-7 in the season opener.

Photo by Capt. Alfred A. Smith



1/5 Marines inspect a car while searching the house of a suspected terrorist

Photo by Lance Cpl. Kenneth Lane



Spc. Andrew Retherford of Joy, IL, Spc. Jacob Stivers of Lawrenceville, IL and Spc. Donald Webb of Litchfield, IL. all three of the 135th Engineer Company of Lawrenceville, IL. Under a flag sent to Stivers by the governor of Illinois

Spc. Kimberly Calvert attempts to make a "Snow Angel" in the middle of the Iraqi desert. You will have to guess where she found the "snow".

Photo by Spc. Samantha Kerschner



2/28TH BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM CELEBRATES



All Stories By 1st Lt. Rose Forrest - 2nd BCT E.O. Officer

The 2/28th BCT will celebrate National Hispanic American Heritage month from 15 Sep to 15 Oct.

In 1968, the Congress authorized President Lyndon Johnson to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week, to recognize the accomplishments of Hispanic-American citizens. On Sept 17, Public Law 90-498 was signed to make this a Federally recognized event.

The law was later amended by Public Law 100-402 expanding the week long observance to "National Hispanic Heritage Month" on August 17, 1988.

During this month, America celebrates the traditions, ancestry, and unique experiences of those who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico, the countries of Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15, the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico achieved independence on September 16, and Chile on September 18. National Hispanic American Heritage Month also encompasses Columbus Day and Día de la Raza - commemorating the first immigration of Hispanics to the Americas.

The Spanish were among the first Europeans to explore what is now the United States, and the first to found a permanent settlement here (St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565). From Alaska's Madre de Dios Island to Mexico, Maine, the United States is dotted with Spanish place names.

HISPANIC CONTRIBUTIONS IN OUR COUNTRY'S WARS

War of 1812 - A battalion of Hispanics from the Canary Islands and New Orleans were among General Andrew Jackson's troops who defeated the British at the Battle of New Orleans.

Mexican-American

War - Captain **Juan Sequin** and other Hispanic Texans fought at the Alamo against General Santa Anna's Soldiers.

Civil War - In addition to **David Farragut**, about

10,000 other Hispanics fought in this war, on both sides of the conflict. Among them was Cuban-born **Loretta Janet Velasquez**, who fought for the Confederacy disguised as a man. Before she was discovered and discharged from the Army, she fought in several battles, including the Battle of Bull Run. Afterwards, she became an effective spy for the South. On the Union side was Cuban-born **Federico Fernandez Cavada**, who fought in the Battles of Antietam, Fredericksburg and Gettysburg and was sent to Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. Later, he wrote a



Boricuas Fist Teams: Above, Soldiers from HHB, 2-162 FA, Headquartered in San Juan, Puerto Rico, assigned to 2-222 FA at Camp Ramadi

book about his experiences, participated in Cuba's 10-Year War and attained the rank of general.

The highest ranking Hispanic in the Union Army was **General George Meade**, who was born and raised in Cadiz, Spain. He won the battle of Gettysburg in 1863.

World War II - Over 400,000 Hispanics served in the U.S. armed forces during this war. Twelve were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. In August

1995, Secretary of Defense William Perry participated in a ceremony to honor these people, whose acts of heroism under fire were awe inspiring.

Korean War - Thousands of Hispanics served here. The 65th Infantry Regiment, made up of Puerto Ricans, took part in nine major campaigns. Nine Hispanics were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. There was also **Colonel Manuel Fernandez** of Florida, who became an ACE for shooting down many MIG fighter planes.

Vietnam War - Thousands of Hispanics were involved here, too. Among them was **Everett Alvarez**, a decorated pilot, who spent eight and a half years as a prisoner of war, the longest confirmed POW of this conflict. Hispanic representation in the fighting forces in Southeast Asia was double what it was in the civilian population at home. Several earned the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Gulf War - About 25,000 Hispanics served in the U.S. military during this war in 1991.



39 Hispanics Have Been Awarded The Medal of Honor

<u>ADAMS, LUCIAN</u>	<u>GONZALES, DAVID M.</u>	<u>PEREZ, MANUEL JR.</u>
<u>BACA, JOHN P.</u>	<u>GUILLEN, AMBROSIO</u>	<u>RASCON, ALFRED</u>
<u>BARKELEY, DAVID B.</u>	<u>HERNANDEZ, RODOLFO P.</u>	<u>ROCCO, LOUIS R.</u>
<u>BAZAAR, PHILIP</u>	<u>HERRERA, SILVESTRE S.</u>	<u>RODRIGUEZ, CLETO</u>
<u>BENAVIDEZ, ROY P.</u>	<u>JIMENEZ, JOSE FRANCISCO</u>	<u>RODRIGUEZ, JOSEPH C.</u>
<u>DE LA GARZA, EMILIO A. JR.</u>	<u>KEITH, MIGUEL</u>	<u>RUBIO, EURIPIDES</u>
<u>DIAS, RALPH E.</u>	<u>LOPEZ, BALDOMERO</u>	<u>RUIZ, ALEJANDRO R. RENTERIA</u>
<u>FERNANDEZ, DANIEL</u>	<u>LOPEZ, JOSE M.</u>	<u>SANTIAGO-COLON, HECTOR</u>
<u>GARCIA, FERNANDO LUIS</u>	<u>LOZADA, CARLOS JAMES</u>	<u>SILVA, FRANCE</u>
<u>GARCIA, MARCARIO</u>	<u>MARTINEZ, BENITO</u>	<u>VALDEZ, JOSE F.</u>
<u>GOMEZ, EDWARD</u>	<u>MARTINEZ, JOE P.</u>	<u>VARGAS, M. SANDO, JR.</u>
<u>GONSALVES, HAROLD</u>	<u>OBREGON, EUGENE ARNOLD</u>	<u>VILLEGAS, YSMAEL R.</u>
<u>GONZALEZ, ALFREDO</u>	<u>ORTEGA, JOHN</u>	<u>YABES, MAXIMO</u>

A Letter from the Boricuas Soldiers Working with the 222 Field Artillery in their native Spanish.

“Serán muchos los llamados, y pocos los escogidos”, así cita las sagradas escrituras. Así a sido para este pequeño grupo de Soldados Puertorriqueños. Que entre los cincuenta estados y sus tres territorios de la nación americana fueron llamados y entre los pocos escogidos, para dar apoyo en “Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)”.

Este grupo de soldados puertorriqueños pertenece a la HHB 2nd BN 162nd FA, con sus cuarteles generales en San Juan, Puerto Rico. Cuales son parte del “Fire Support Element” 92nd SIB PRARNG. Son los primeros soldados especializados, en ser movilizados para ejercer tareas específicas en el escenario de combate en Iraq. Como parte de la HHB 2ND BN 222ND FA UTARNG, con sus cuarteles generales en Utah.

Durante el periodo en que este grupo de soldados Boricuas, llevan movilizados han demostrado una vez más la capacidad, calidad, profesionalismo, dedicación y valentía del soldado puertorriqueño.

*To find the translation and learn more about Hispanic American Heritage Month, read the Equal Opportunity Gazette, posted by
1st. Lt. Rose Forrest.*



"The Borinqueneers"

South Korea, February 2, 1951
During its service in Korea, the men of the 65th Infantry won four Distinguished Service Crosses and 125 Silver Stars. The "The Borinqueneers" were also awarded the Presidential and Meritorious Unit Commendations, two Korean Presidential Unit Citations and the Greek Gold Medal for Bravery. The 65th Infantry Regiment's gallant service in a difficult war is exemplified by its regimental motto, "Honor and Fidelity," and the regiment itself exemplifies the National Guard's leading role in our nation's military history.

Hispanic Holidays

Holiday	Date
Independence Day For Costa Rica El Salvador Guatemala Honduras Nicaragua	15 Sept.
Mexico Independence Day	16 Sept.
Chile Independence Day	18 Sept.
Columbus Day	3 Oct.
Día de la Raza	

SEE AND READ THE IRON SOLDIER IN VIVID COLOR AT <http://ironsoldiers.army.mil>

CAMP RAMADI SPORTS

All photos by Johnny John - MWR Coordinator



Poker Run held on Labor Day



(Left to Right) Sandra Cardenas, Barbra Mays and Daniel Haagen. Mays is displaying her 2nd Place Full House of 3s over 9s.



(Left) Israel Arroyo and Eric Hiltbold. Eric finished the race with three 9s



Softball Tournament

21 teams entered!

Games will be played on the 17th and 24th at the main softball field.

(left) Illinois Boys and Brig Rats displaying good sportsmanship.

(right) Illinois Boys centerfielder Jonathan Davis



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1/167 U.S. Cavalry

1st Lt. Jacques Smith
1st Lt. James Belprez



AR-RAMADI COMBAT VOLLEYBALL STANDINGS



(Above) Team Trucks vs. Team HIV (Middle) The current Combat Volleyball leader - The Thirsty Beavers from 983rd Engineers (Bottom) Team Trucks from the 1/5 Marines

Photos by Johnny John - MWR Coordinator

Volleyball Team Standings		Matches Won	Matches Lost
1	Thirsty Beavers	6	0
2	Illinois Boys	5	0
3	Yeager Bombs	5	0
4	Squirrels	4	1
5	Praetorians	4	1
6	HIV	4	2
7	91 ball Smackers	3	3
8	Team Trucks	3	3
9	Log Dogs	3	3
10	The Extensions	2	3
11	Brig Rats	1	3
12	Flopping Tailgate	1	5
13	Greased Lightning	0	5
14	Inbreds	0	6
15	Staff Magnums	0	6

STANDINGS AS OF 13 SEP 2005



Have a story or picture for the Iron Soldiers?



Contributions from all Soldiers throughout the 2nd Brigade Combat Team are encouraged for consideration. Please enclose a detailed description of the people (name, rank and unit) and subject matter for each story and photo. Include your name, unit and contact information.

Contact your unit Public Affairs Rep located on the left side of this page or send an email to richard.scaraciottoli@us.army.mil

REST IN PEACE, WARRIOR



In Memory Of
Sergeant Matthew Bohling
Able Company, 2-69TH Armor